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ORATION

"THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY,"

CHARLES SPRAGUE SMITH.

1887.



# NEW YORK DELTA OF PHI BETA KAPPA.

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## ANNUAL ORATION

BY

PROF. CHARLES SPRAGUE SMITH, A.M.

SUBJECT :

“THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY.”

COLUMBIA COLLEGE LIBRARY.



THURSDAY, JUNE 2D, 1887, AT 8 P. M.

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PRINTED FOR THE CHAPTER.



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OF

## The New York Delta of Phi Beta Kappa.

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1886—1887.

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## THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY.

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The Muse of Hellas stood upon Olympus, looking southward. At her feet lay a block of Parian marble, formless and stained with soil. Before her wingéd vision space yielded, and Egypt's Art, once free, but now bound by artificial laws, ranging in order its creations, exclaimed, "Lo, the highest ; lo, the unsurpassable ! "

But that prescient spirit saw the fetters, and turned away. Musing, she lifted the coarse block, and, shaping it first in uncouth lines borrowed from the south, sought then, in the image of the ideal visible to her inner eye, to form the unformed, removing every fetter, every clinging chain, until the marble rose and spoke.

Stand where thou wilt, lover of thy country, and, looking backward and forward, thou shalt recognize the opportunity placed in our hands of giving to the world a truer, fuller expression of the ideal in government, in art and in religion than any history records. But how act in view of this our responsibility ? Is the morn breaking, and shall we await her coming upon the eastern hills ? The morn is not breaking ; our eyes may not behold the day when, the insatiate thirst for gain in a measure stilled, the worship of the material become less all-engrossing, Art, the noble, the majestic, shall come and the old forms receive a new and higher life.

The river, green-walled beside, and barred by nature or by man before, loiters that it may gather depth and strength. A Lessing lifts away obstructions and traces with wearying toil a path, o'er which a Schiller and a Goethe shall run. Ah! but there is an inspiration in such quiet, patient endeavor. The tiniest brooklet, that merges its separate life in the sea, lives on in its waters—nameless, but immortal; the humblest human life, whose energy is given to the ideal, lives on immortal in its silent influences. That thy lot falls in the days when those who toil may not inscribe their names deeply upon time's tablets should give a more abiding inspiration.

A period of transition, a period of preparation, such, if we err not, is the historical position assigned to our age. A sense of halting and of questioning pervades the universal consciousness. For humanity may not drift on and away, like the impassive stream, recking not of its whence and whither; anon a self-consciousness awakes, demanding imperiously of the present its sources and law of progression, in order that, with clearer vision and ordered march, society may move toward the morrow.

Whence have we come and whither are we bound? This is the ever recurring interrogation to-day in sociology. A single phase of this vast problem forms the theme of our present consideration, namely, the future of our higher education as fore-indicated by its past; or, in other words, the American University—its nature and functions.

According to those best informed, the path to the professional schools no longer crosses the college portals.

The explanation of this phenomenon is to be found mainly in the lack of adaptation to existing needs of our system of higher liberal education. The evils arising therefrom in the decadence of true science, with the resulting

tendency to rate all mental activity according to a purely material standard, have been observed and commented upon by all. The urgent necessity of some kind of reorganization, a necessity ever more clearly and universally recognized, has voiced itself on more than one occasion in the demand for the creation of an American university.

Thus a score of years since, in 1869, the National Teachers' Association appointed a committee, in which every state was represented, to formulate a plan of organization, and lay the foundations of such an institution.

That such need of reorganization exists is indisputable. Admitting it then as a premise, how shall the desired transformation be effected? In other words, is the university to exercise this reformatory function, and, if so, what is to be its structural plan, and upon what foundations is it to rest?

Etymologically and theoretically the word "Universitas" implies a system of instruction embracing the whole of human knowledge; in practice, however, it defines, usually, simply and solely the highest grade of the actual scholastic curriculum; though in France the entire system of pedagogics, from Alpha to Omega, from the elementary school to the licentiate, during the first half of the present century, was styled "The University." In our argument we shall accept the word with its customary limitations.

Before proceeding to our inquiry let us establish a few principles:

First. There is in every clime and country a process of development social, political, educational, which, having its *raison d'être* in the past, may be styled historical and national. Any force that is to make toward perfectionment must be applied in the line of this historic growth.

For, though comparative science shows man the world over progressing along parallel lines from the stone age to

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the golden, from the patriarchal to the self-ruling, nevertheless, here, as in nature, the constant presence of a variable element renders identity impossible. While, therefore, each nation may and should learn from every other, and, in accord with the principles determined by its organic constitution and its own past development, apply the lessons learned, it should never attempt substitution. In the case of any true folk that within itself possesses, even in germ, the principle of healthful growth, such a course would be wasteful of years, if not suicidal. This we may regard as an axiom of history.

Second. All development is gradual, in human society as well as in the higher physical world. *Ohne hast aber ohne rast*, without haste, without rest, the processes of evolution succeed ; we must wait upon law, working with it, seeking neither to hasten nor to retard its movement.

Third. Every organization, to exist and to be efficient, must stand in accord with the laws of time and place.

In the light of these principles, let us proceed now to examine the nature of the university *per se* and its relations to American society.

I. What does the educational record of our past contain ? Whence have we come, and by what paths? . . .

Time does not permit us to follow to its source, step by step, the pedagogic stream that nourishes the nineteenth century, nor to determine the nature and relative importance of the various forces whose resultant action has fixed its path and formed its character.

It is enough for our purpose to note simply, that, moving from imperial Rome, hidden by monastic and cathedral walls during the dark ages, this stream came forth again definitively to the light in Italy and France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and was thence led all

over Europe, the University of Paris especially forming the grand educational model for that middle-age community of catholic states, in which France held the first place.

These primitive universities were divided into four faculties: Arts, Theology, Law and Medicine; the faculty of Arts conferring the liberal education of the middle ages, the so-called trivium and quadrivium, and thus occupying a position somewhat analogous to that held by the department of Philosophy in the German universities of to-day.

At the University of Paris the Arts faculty was the first constituted and the most important by far, while the faculty of Law gave to Bologna its celebrity.

Under the wing of the university were reared the colleges which, to quote Matthew Arnold's words, "were created to supply centers of discipline which the university—in itself an apparatus merely of teachers and lecture-rooms—did not provide."\* In France the opposition of the university to the renaissance produced stagnation, while in Germany the petrifaction of protestantism led to a similar result.

Under state supervision the reorganization demanded, in order to place the higher education abreast of the intellectual needs of the present, has been generally realized upon the continent.

The work of reconstruction in France dates from the revolution—that period of chaos and new creation.

The organization, introduced at that epoch, held in force, essentially unchanged, until 1850.†

The entire empire was divided, for educational purposes, into a certain number of districts, styled academies, each having at its head a rector, while the whole constituted the

\*Matthew Arnold—"Schools and Universities on the Continent," p. 9.

†See J. B. Simonet, "*Traité Élémentaire de Droit Public et Administratif*."

university, over which a grand master presided, assisted by a council.

The restoration maintained the Napoleonic university, but transferred the power of the grand master to the minister of public instruction and ecclesiastical affairs.

Since 1850 the monopoly of the state in the field of education has been overthrown, and individuals or associations, duly qualified, are legally authorized to establish schools of secondary and (since 1875) of superior or university instruction, provided they have first secured the assent of the academic authorities of their respective districts.

Such private schools, while enjoying a certain degree of independence, must always be open to official inspection, while the conferring of the university degrees can take place only before the faculties of the state.

As regards the public schools the general disciplinary functions fall to the lycées and to the communal colleges, the former being supported by the state, the latter by the communes. These establishments of secondary instruction are divided, furthermore, into two classes; those of "*Enseignement Classique*," conferring the time-approved classical education, and those of "*Enseignement Special*," intended to prepare for non-professional pursuits, such as business, agriculture, etc. The courses of instruction in the lycées and colleges are crowned with the baccalaureate degree and lead up to the higher curricula of the special schools, such as the "*École Normale*," "*École Polytechnique*," "*École des Chartes*," "*École de Saint Cyr*," "*École de Pharmacie*," etc., and to that of the faculties located in the seventeen academic centers.\*

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\*(Law of 1854). Aix, Besançon, Bordeaux, Caen, Chambery, Clermont, Dijon, Douai, Grenoble, Lyon, Montpellier, Nancy, Paris, Poitiers, Rennes, Toulouse, and Alger.

These university faculties are five in number, namely, Theology, Law, Medicine, Science and Letters; though all are not represented at every center. Beside these state establishments we have, as above noted, private schools of secondary and superior instruction. As an example of the latter we may mention the “*École Libre des Sciences Politiques*.”

In Germany the modern theories of education have perhaps found their most complete expression. In general it may be said that the province of secondary instruction is occupied by the “Gymnasium” and the “Real-Schule”\*; the former giving chief prominence to the humanities, the latter to the modern languages and the industrial sciences.

Usually distinct institutions, we find them at times combined, in which case only the first two years of the entire nine years’ course are common to both.

The “*Zeugniss der Reife*,” the testimonial conferred at the completion of the course, corresponds to our baccalaureate degree. The university receives the gymnasial alumnus to all of its faculties, the *reäl* alumnus to a certain number\*\*, and is itself usually divided into four faculties; Theology, Law, Medicine and Philosophy—the last embracing the humanities, and the mathematical and natural sciences.

The course of Theology, Law or Philosophy in Prussia requires three years; of Medicine, four.

The entire direction of public instruction is placed under the active supervision of the state.

Analogous conditions meet us everywhere upon the con-

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\*Since 1882 Prussia has three kinds of institutions of secondary instruction: the “Humanistische Gymnasien,” *i. e.*, the Gymnasien proper, the “Real-Gymnasien” (Real-Schulen, where Latin is studied), and Ober-Real Schulen (without Latin). Course in each and all nine years.

\*\* To certain branches of the Philosophical faculty.

tinent; so that, in general, the work of reorganization may be summed up as follows:

I. The creation of university faculties adequate to the intellectual demands of the age.

II. The giving of organic form and logical continuity to the whole scheme of secondary instruction.

III. The gradual recognition of the fact that, with the broad domain opened to the human mind to-day, a bifurcation in secondary instruction is desirable, and perhaps from a very early period.

In England the relation of the college to the university was similar to that which obtained in France. The former afforded thus a center of discipline and, through its endowments, extended to the poorer classes the advantages of education. Theoretically the highway, the *Via Appia* of learning, led through the two stadia of the Arts Faculty, trivium and quadrivium, up to Theology; actually, however, we find multitudes abandoning, already at a very early period, the arts' curriculum, at the close of the first stadium, in order to turn their attention to civil or canonic law, since these paths of research afforded greater material rewards.

With the centuries a gradual transformation comes. The colleges of Oxford and Cambridge absorb, by degrees, well-nigh the entire charge of instruction, especially of that connected with the faculty of arts, while the functions of the university become almost exclusively executive.

Prior to the birth of the universities, existed the grammar or Latin schools, successors of the cathedral schools. In the episcopal cities, their curriculum embraced both trivium and quadrivium, elsewhere only the latter. With the greater breadth given to the quadrivium in the universities, the importance of the grammar schools naturally

declined, until they seem to have occupied simply the field of secondary instruction.

No reorganization analogous to that realized upon the continent has been effected in England, where the higher education is not under state control, and the lack of adaptation to existing needs is perhaps more marked there than here in America. The argument in favor of some kind of general supervision is obvious; but it is not a necessary inference that we must apply the continental principle of active governmental control to those of our colleges, which, being neither the offspring nor the adoptive children of the state, may, and we believe will, attain greater usefulness when left to themselves, that is, to the guidance of those whom they shall elect to the discharge of such supervisory functions, than when subjected to so changeful a control as that which apparently inheres in the constitution of every democracy.

In New England the higher system of general education, brought over from Old England, was divided here as there into the two stadia of the college and the grammar school; the latter being superseded in quite recent times by the so-called Academy. The curriculum of the American college was, in the main, modelled upon that of the parent country, special consideration, however, being given to theological science, since the training of a ministry was regarded as the most important function of these institutions. The curriculum of Harvard thus in 1638 seems to have embraced Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee and Syriac, logic, ethics, arithmetic, physics, metaphysics, polities, and divinity; representing, thus, besides the province of a faculty of Arts, in a measure, also, that of a faculty of Theology.

While the early vital statistics of our American colleges, at least those accessible to us, do not afford a

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basis for accurate computation, the average age at graduation during the first quarter of a century of Yale's existence, from 1703 to 1728, seems to have been a fraction above twenty years, and this we shall assume as fairly representing the status of the American college of that period in respect to this point.

The educational system developing with the demands for higher and more varied mental training, the following changes have taken place :

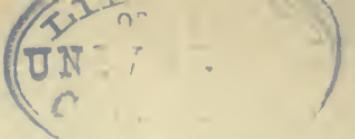
First. The higher post-collegiate discipline in the faculties of Medicine, Theology and Law, which was, for a considerable period, left to a kind of private pupilage, has secured recognition, and systematic instruction in each of these departments is now offered in schools specially organized to meet these special demands.

Second. The college, delimited in its functions to those of a faculty of Arts, and not impeded, as in England, by a stubborn spirit of conservatism, in its struggle to hold pace with the age, has year by year enlarged and modified its curriculum, replacing the old unity by a multiplicity, and drawing, of course, the academy after it, until the latter has absorbed quite a portion of the work formerly embraced in the collegiate quadrennium.

This process of evolution is at present, comparatively speaking, rapid. In corresponding ratio the average age at graduation has been raised.

For, while the German gymnasial courses of general disciplinary training are absolved with the nineteenth or twentieth year, the French with the eighteenth or nineteenth, to place the average age at graduation from our eastern colleges at from twenty-two to twenty-three years would probably be rather an under- than an over-estimate.

Two distinct phases may be observed in this evolution,



whose line of march we have just traced. During the earlier stage in the history of the American college, essentially one and the same disciplinary cursus obtains for all; during the latter, that toward which the movement proceeds, the curriculum is gradually transformed in accord with the most diverse intellectual demands.

We have now but to look at the continent to understand whence we have come and whither we are tending, educationally speaking. The earlier phase in this development represents the gymnasial or academic stadium of the faculty of Arts, the later, the university department of Arts or Philosophy. For the first aims at laying broad common foundations, while the second, considering such foundations as already sufficiently broad and firm, rears thereupon intellectual structures of a more special and class character.

We see, therefore, the American college, delimited in scope to the faculty of Arts, emerging contemporaneously with the firm establishment in distinct schools of the other faculties, from the position of hand-maid to its sisters into the full equality of the university phase, while the academy accepts the general disciplinary functions slowly handed down from the college. The national and historical line of development with us, then, is clearly this: out of the college to evolve the university faculty of Arts, while relegating to the academy the charge of laying broad general foundations.

Be it clearly understood that we define only tendencies, not results attained. Admitting as a logical sequence that, with the complete evolution of the university, the special schools of Medicine, Theology, Law, etc., will no longer in theory lean upon the faculty of Arts (practically, as before observed, they do not to-day), but stand shoulder to shoulder, if not co-ordinated with it, it must be borne in mind that we are looking forth into a future more or less remote,

and need not take alarm, because, from the standpoint of the present, such a transformation might appear deplorable. On the other hand, we must not forget that the full evolution of the university will entail such a reorganization of secondary instruction as shall unite under one curriculum and in one institution the entire general disciplinary training, now illogically dissevered, and modify it so as to meet existing demands. We venture, furthermore, the prophecy, that the pursuit of Medicine, Theology, Law, etc., for their own sakes, that is as sciences, and not as *brod studien*, bread studies, will be then less abnormal than at present.

The university faculty of Arts is thus to be simply a more complete evolution, following the time-traced lines; in a word, the American college of to-day is the embryo of the American university faculty of Arts or Philosophy of to-morrow.

II. As second principle we simply repeated the well-worn saw of "make haste slowly." We may best consider here the point reached to-day in this process of evolution.

While the true law of mental architecture, as verified by the experience of all ages and peoples, is to lay first broad foundations, it is not so facile a task to determine, at a given moment, in the light of a universal consensus, the exact signification of broad.

Certainly the content of broad in France, Italy and England six centuries ago does not fill to the full the potentiality of that word to-day.

Broad has, however, always signified, educationally speaking, first, the general discipline of the intellectual faculties, and, second, the communication of those elements of knowledge that at a given period are judged necessary, in the higher sense, to intellectual pleasure and fruitfulness. With this interpretation of broad, when in our intellectual

palaestra, is that *sine qua non* to-day attained? And where, therefore, shall we begin to build our university? At the expiration of the collegiate course? But the school of Arts has emerged already in a measure from this purely disciplinary phase. At the close of the so-called academic course as now existing, even in our foremost institutions of second grade? We declare unhesitatingly no! Let him who questions but weigh in just scales the quantum of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, and historical discipline and knowledge received within the academic walls. Since now simple fiat will neither create nor transform an organism, and no added syllables or sonorousness serve to transform the college faculty of Arts into the university faculty, to place by fiat a university, or complex of special intellectual structures upon the foundations to-day afforded by our academies is, if our reasoning be just, to act with undue haste and precipitancy, while to base such university faculty upon our colleges is to defer too long the superstructure. But here, as everywhere, it is easier to pronounce negatively than to indicate with certainty the actual line of separation of the university from the academic phase.

What renders such a task doubly difficult is the lack of homogeneity within our colleges. Theoretically, all of our departments should have advanced *pari passu*; actually, this is far from being the case. We venture, however, the assertion that, holding clearly in view the laws of development above indicated, such a reorganization of the earlier year or years may be effected as shall enable us to fix for the moment clear lines of demarcation, and, in accordance therewith, arrange within the college our academic and university courses. That such a line of demarcation should, immediately and in every case, be drawn at right

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angles to the college course we do not consider as either wise or essential ; though, if feasible, such a division would afford at once the most practical and the most efficient solution. If desired, let the amount of each science necessary to meet the demands of fundamental culture be determined by careful reflection. There for that branch let the line be drawn. In any and every case, however, it should be borne in mind that we have to do with an organism destined to outgrow any cloak we may put upon it. Speaking in plain terms, we believe that, in the case of our most advanced institutions, this desideratum of culture may be attained by the close of the second year, and, in some departments, possibly earlier.

Assuming now that the point of departure of the university from the academic or gymnasial phase may be determined, what seems to be the course indicated by wisdom for us to follow during the period of transition, through which our colleges are now passing ? What other, in sooth, than to admit the university principle, which, as we have seen, is logically that of election, wherever the university already exists ?

In seeking to answer one question, we have but raised another. Admitting the principle of election, how shall it be applied ? As heretofore, we must find some touchstone for our argument. Manifestly, while the academic course aims at general mental discipline first and at intellectual acquisition thereafter, in the case of the university courses the greater prominence is given to acquisition, while the mental gymnastic is directed more to the development of strength and alertness in special directions. Now as these latter courses are not intended to afford intellectual diversion, but rather to make each strong to run his appointed race, is it not manifestly wiser,

at least for the present, for those who know by experience of American life and its needs in this our nineteenth century, to mark out with generous wisdom courses leading somewhither, than to place a decision, upon which so much depends, in the election of minds that cannot, in any probability, act with true insight and forethought? For the present absence of logical continuity from our academic courses produces defective mental discipline and immaturity. Furthermore, in view of the limited demand for post-academic liberal (Arts) culture in America, any university organization similar to that existing upon the continent, would be to-day premature and, from the financial standpoint, unpractical. With regard to the strictly academical courses we will only add that, to our mind, election, if admitted at all, should be confined within the narrowest limits, mediating thus between the just claims of the humanities on the one side and of realism on the other; so that our general disciplinary curricula shall represent in parallel lines the higher stadia of both the gymnasia and the real schools of the continent.

Minor points under this head, for example, whether one, two or more years should be added to the present collegiate curriculum to complete the university course in Arts, what degrees should be conferred, and when, our limits forbid us to discuss. We would simply observe that, inasmuch as the baccalaureate, or its equivalent, represents the completed stadium of general discipline, it should logically be conferred at the close of the gymnasial curriculum as in France, though obvious reasons may render such a rearrangement ill-timed, prior to the complete evolution of the university.

Our argument leads, then, to the conclusion that the natural starting point for our university courses to-day is

to be found at the end of the second or third year of the present so-called collegiate curriculum.

But is it possible or desirable even immediately to dissever the two stadia of discipline, now conjoined, the general and the special, relegating the former to an American gymnasium or academy, and calling forth into existence at once, as a distinct entity, the university? What is to become of the thousand and one American colleges, when the university appears, if the re-organized academy assumes the entire charge of the disciplinary work?

The discussion of these and similar questions, suggested by our argument, falls naturally under our third principle, to wit :

III. Every organism, to exist and to be efficient, must stand in accord with the laws of time and place.

While the deductions from this principle have already found to a certain extent illustration in the process of our argument, there remain still important points to be elucidated.

First and foremost the scope of the American University ; its mission as an educator.

The permanence of institutions in any country depends upon the intelligence and the harmonious co-working of those elements of the body politic in whose hands rests the ultimate authority.

In every democratic government this control is theoretically exercised by all classes, the special influence accruing to each depending upon its relative intelligence and numerical strength. History, however, shows a centrifugal force, always operative, tending ever more and more to vest with the ultimate authority the class numerically strongest. Our future usefulness as a nation, nay, our future existence, depends therefore :

1st. Upon the maintenance of a high intellectual average among the masses, and

2d. Upon the fostering of an intelligent sympathy between the various elements of our body politic.

Again, the right to be of any organism, ethically considered, is contingent upon its sustaining a relation of full active sympathy with the whole of life.

What, now, is the part in American life which belongs to our university?

We are firmly convinced, that its calling, like its name, is catholic. To the few it is to be a guide through those regions which science is slowly wresting from the unknown, inspiring the pupil, in his turn, to extend the domains of conquest. To the many its mission is to communicate in intelligible form the results of its activity.

In other words, in addition to its courses for matriculates, the university will afford the masses opportunities of acquainting themselves with the latest results of research in all directions. For instruction in history, political and natural science, literature, etc., intended for the people and arranged in such a manner, as regards time and place, as shall best accord with their convenience, forms, we believe, as intrinsic a part of the province of the American University as the esoteric instruction. How this theory can be applied, whether such popular instruction should be communicated directly by the professors themselves, or mediately through others, whose thought is less wonted to severe forms of expression—this and similar points are but questions of detail.

We conceive of the American University, then, as a focus of universal enlightenment, to the matriculates, to the cultured few, and to the toiling and ruling myriads of our State. That a thousand objections to this proposition will

be brought we are aware ; but with the three factors, of wisdom in adaptation of means to ends, patience, and time, we are convinced that the impracticable and the impossible will be found entirely capable of realization.

It seems superfluous to point out the powerful influence such an institution would exert upon the elevation of the intellectual average, upon the maintenance of an intelligent sympathy between the different classes of society, and upon the quickening of national sentiment.

The second point that falls naturally under this head is the religious question. Here, as always, we must build upon broad principles. The American University cannot be sectarian. It is to educate the sons of Jew and Gentile ; it must stand, therefore, upon ground common to both. It must be the true expression of our religious thought as a people. And now, we ask, what is this thought? Upon many an earnest, honest mind stands already graven the answer. The search for truth, the aspiration toward nobility, are the links of universal spiritual brotherhood. From the vale with bounded horizon where birth placed us, one and all, education, contact with humanity, lead upward to this height. Not that you or I are to deny the old ; by no means. We are of those who behold the beauty and the power of the old first, when it is illumined by this thought.

Climb the hills of your northern wilderness, and, standing upon some bared peak, let the eye follow the unbroken sweep of forest until sky and hills meet.

The rills, that unseen move valleyward, seek here the Hudson, there the St. Lawrence, but all unerringly a common ocean.

Humanity awakes everywhere into consciousness with an intuition of the infinite, and, with earnest patience, seeks, by paths the fathers trod, or others, self-traced out,

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trusting some time to behold and to comprehend that which it long ago presaged.

The earth-walled river loses its separate existence in attaining the limitless ocean ; the finite may not comprehend the infinite, until the walls of material life have fallen apart. But the same ocean awaits the patient, tireless search of the rills, and the same Infinite Spirit, the tireless, patient search of the finite.

And it is this intuition of the infinite and this patient following on through light and shadow, that constitute the link uniting us all, man with man, in one common brotherhood.

But while our American University in the very nature of things cannot be sectarian, and while the inculcation of theological dogma is not its province, we hold, nevertheless, that its character should reflect the universal religious sentiments and convictions of our American society. We are most certainly a religious people, in the broad, deep signification of that word, and our American University, in its teachings and influence, will, we trust, always stand in the forefront, and on the side of a catholic, enlightened and progressive religious thought.

Hitherto, while studying the development of the university, and attempting to determine the point reached in the process of evolution, we have treated it as a thing of the future.

But while its full activity unquestionably belongs to tomorrow, it is a pertinent question whether, observing the lines of development already traced, it may not to-day, even, be treated as a distinct organism and, as such, be placed upon an independent basis. The significant fact that a number, rapidly augmenting, of our young men seek European universities, and the success attending the Johns

Hopkins experiment render this question an even more pertinent one.

But can we, without disturbing the action of laws, call into being at once a completed organism? We would answer this question by declaring that to recognize outwardly distinctions that already inwardly exist, through evolution, is not to anticipate the action of law. The leaf-stalk, that has emerged from the soil, distinguishing itself thus from the root, with which in the embryo it was in a sense confounded, we are permitted to treat as distinct, though we may not attempt, by force or by jugglery, to draw it forth into the fully developed tree.

To-day in America we have to do with two phases of higher liberal education, the academy or gymnasium, and the university, entirely distinct in character and purpose, the one from the other. Why seek to perpetuate the form of transition represented by the American college, which, having outgrown in a measure the gymnasial phase, without having as yet attained the fullness of the university, presents so much confusion in aims, and accomplishes frequently such unsatisfactory results? Why not rather relegate to the academy, broadened or new created, the entire gymnasial work, and upon such basis begin at once to rear our university? We are well aware of the difficulties involved therein. In the case of the majority of our long-established colleges, the process of abandonment to the academy of general education and the consequent enlargement of the province of the latter institution, must perhaps be a gradual process, effected only by slow increase from year to year in the requirements for matriculation.

But only a small percentage of our colleges, to be determined by natural selection, are destined to become universities, and an institution, representing distinctly and

solely the university phase, if placed at once on its natural historic basis, would become a powerful factor in the reorganization of our higher education, inasmuch as it would place distinct goals before the institutions of both grades, and stimulate everywhere zealous effort toward their attainment.

The immediate organization of the American University, as a distinct entity is, therefore, we submit, entirely possible.

What is to become of the American Colleges? The future holds the answer, and we can only surmise. A few will develop into universities, many must be reorganized as simple academies or gymnasia; but, in all probability, the majority will continue to exist, essentially unchanged, ministering to the intellectual requirements of those for whom the university provides too broad, the academy too restricted a field.

There remains a question of pertinence to those of us who are placed at the great centers of American life.

We lack too often a true civic spirit. But love for the state is born at the fireside and nurtured in the civic assembly. How, then, shall we attain true national life, if we fail to foster true civic life? The material digestive centers already, our great cities may and should become the intellectual foci of America. But are we worthy to assume this responsibility, worthy to lead forth into expression this grand new life of the western world? Not until the barriers of selfish interest have fallen, and you and I love more the whole than that petty fraction environed by our social circle.

O that there were something that might draw together our best energies, and give them forth again vitalized from a common center!

Behold it is here among us, if we but will it—a university fulfilling its proper function of educator to the few and

to the many—a true American organism, lifted to independence of thought and expression! Behold that which may prepare us for our calling, and through us lead forth into expression that life whose pulsations are richer with possibilities than those of ancient Greece or Rome!

For this is not an idle fancy. Humanity does progress, and the more in accord with the ideal, the race-expression, socially and politically, the more fitting will be the habitation that awaits the coming of art, and, when that long-expected day dawns, the more simple and adequate her language.

All the other points that naturally fall under this head, such as the advisability or non-advisability of co-ordinating the different university faculties, how many distinct schools we should recognize, etc., are mere matters of detail, which it is not our purpose to examine here.

Summing up, now, our argument leads to the following conclusions:

First. The American college is in embryo the university faculty of Arts or Philosophy, and has already emerged in a measure from the academic and gymnasial phase.

Second. The process of evolution not being as yet consummated, to treat the entire four-year period of culture as post-academic is precipitate.

Third. To regard the present collegiate course as wholly academic is to defer too long the university superstructure, both on account of the point already attained in the process of evolution as well as in view of the practical considerations, which devolve from the comparison of the present age at graduation from the American college with that of the alumni of the lycées and gymnasien.

Fourth. Such an internal reorganization of our collegiate curricula may be effected as shall place the starting point of the university courses to day at the end of the third and, we believe, even of the second year.

Fifth. This line of demarcation may deflect during the present transitional period according to departments and need not be a straight line.

Sixth. Election should be admitted wherever the University exists, meaning thereby rather elective courses than elective studies.

Seventh. Election, if admitted at all during the academic stadium, should be confined within the narrowest limits.

Eighth. The scope of the university is to be two-fold : to instruct the few and to enlighten the many; to stimulate and elevate all classes of society.

Ninth. The American University should be unsectarian and yet religious, though not as such inculcating religion.

Tenth. The university may be established immediately on its true historic basis, and its influence will thus tend to direct and to accelerate the reorganization of our higher education.

Eleventh. The presence of such an institution in or near each one of our great cities would afford the center and force needed to unite, purify, and energize our individualistic strivings, preparing us to play our part as leaders, and, through us, enabling the American idea to attain adequate expression in art as well as in government.

Where green hill swards slope upward from the Thames, where, following the river's course, or straying the fields across o'er well-trod paths, the pilgrim of to-day may transport himself backward two centuries and more, casting long shadows athwart the soft green velvet of their lawns, the colleges of Oxford rise, luring to retrospection with historic memories, and dreamy with clustering ivy.

Where the hum of the busiest of European political workshops, directed by the grandest intellect perchance of

our age, is ever heard, deepening the shadow upon dull pavements that but yesterday echoed to the tread of conquering armies, a bare, deserted castle, the University of Berlin rises.

On many a hilltop, and many a murmuring stream beside, the American college stands, and long may it stand there; for, during that stage when the individual character is most receptive of outward impressions, at nature's school and in the buoyant health-giving air, our American youth shall thus best be fitted, spiritually as well as physically, to endure, to be true and noble. But the academic portals close upon youth, and, like some great magnet, the city attracts.

Behold them thronging our gates, bringing to us the freshness of their young manhood! They come to be tested in this arena, hoping, through contact with the intenser life stirring at this center, to make their individual lives richer and more fruitful.

How shall we best prepare these, our young men, to grapple with the great social and political problems of the age, which, under the freer conditions of our civilization, should attain a more natural and speedy solution here than elsewhere?

And how, with and through them, place the aristocracy of thought in sympathetic relations with the democracy, that each may listen to the pleading of the other and, class prejudice removed, the common interest of both may prevail?

The rays of a warm southern sun fell, a mocking impotent rain of light, upon the despairing Syracuse, until an Archimedes, binding in one sheaf the scattered beams, launched it forth a bolt of death upon the beleaguered fleet.

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While the American University, though lifted to independence of thought and expression, may not create a republic of Plato, it may do much toward focalizing and energizing these intellectual rays that are now diffused ; directing them against those class theories, whatever their name, that are alike subversive of all society, whether their recruits be gathered from the palace, the workshop, or the hovel.

New York City is passing through a transition stage, emerging, we confidently trust, from a past of purely material activity into a future of immense possibilities for good and evil, as the center, at least for a time, of the spiritual and intellectual life of our country.

And, in a large degree, is it true, that we of to-day may make of this city what we will, that it lies as plastic clay in our hands. Shall we then shape it still in the image of Mammon, and fall down before it, or shall we infuse into it our own noblest thoughts, our own noblest selves, until, transformed, it bodies forth the ideal, until its influence shall be felt as an inspiration, all pervasive, all persuading?

But, as no harvest comes without the sowing, so no elevation of the character and influence of a civilization, without a force energetically active and a basis for its application.

If New York City is to become pre-eminently the point for the application of that intellectual and spiritual leverage which is to elevate our American society, the metropolitan university is, we believe, to be the lever.

Man, attempting to stay the onward march of history, <sup>x</sup> is the gracious child lifting its chubby hand to ward off the somber, veiled figure of death, in the dream of the painter. History and law have already determined the site of the American University, and traced its ground

plan. Whether we will or not, a metropolitan university shall be established here in New York City, and in accord with past conditions and future needs.

But while we cannot thwart law, we can work with it.

Come, then, and let us build these halls, from which the inspiration of another and a more favored age shall go forth, as the messenger of the ideal !

And, if with true wisdom, ye would build upon foundations that have withstood the test of time and of experience, where else will ye seek them, citizens of New York, if not here, where Columbia College stands ?

Come, then, and, with reverent hand and consecrated heart, upon these foundations which your fathers have laid place stone upon stone, securing thus for yourselves that immortality, equally attainable by the least and by the greatest, yet, withal, the only true and worthy of human seeking —the immortality of noble purpose and high endeavor !

Albeit the present is neither the time nor the place to consider in detail the mission of Columbia College, we will not withhold the expression of our personal conviction that not only is this institution called upon, indisputably, to prepare at once a basis for the construction of the metropolitan university, but it is also hers to organize the true American academy, removing, perchance, her gymnasial curricula to some academic home overlooking the Hudson, while establishing her university where it belongs, here in the emporium of the Western Hemisphere, here at the center of American life.

Gentlemen, associates of Phi Beta Kappa, and Alumni of Columbia College : man sallies forth from the portals of youth with all the glory of the spring-time stirring in his blood, and with the blue expanse of heaven arched above him. But the experiences of life dull by degrees the quick

pulsations, while its disappointments, like clouds, over-spread more and more the blue, and, with their malign influence, would fain efface even the impression it has left upon the spiritual retina.

But if the true beauty and power of life have once been discerned, we may alway behold them if we will, penetrating in thought the cloud-veil, and clothing anew the gray earth with its green vestments.

Man needs, however, in order to remain steadfast until life's goal be attained—man needs and must have the constant inspiration of a lofty aim.

Happy they who walk toward the sunset, holding their spiritual vision fixed upon some grand ideal! The seeds that fall from their hands—for seeds must fall—with each recurring harvest time shall gladden and not sadden the ages.

To you it has been given to be sons of America and foster-children of Columbia College. It becomes, therefore, peculiarly your privilege and birthright, ay, your imperative duty, to hold up steadfastly before your own spiritual vision, and before that of your fellow-citizens as well, the ideal of a metropolitan university built upon the foundations afforded by your Alma Mater!





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